

Message Text

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FOLLOWING REPEAT MOSCOW 11903 ACTION STATE INFO COLOMBO DACCA
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QUOTE CONFIDENTIAL MOSCOW 11903

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TAGS: AF, UR, PE, PR

SUBJECT: SOVIET MFA - AFGHAN DESK OFFICER DISCUSSES
AFGHANISTAN DEVELOPMENTS

REF: (A) MOSCOW 10946, (B) MOSCOW 11477

SUMMARY: SOVIET MFA AFGHAN DESK OFFICER IS DEFENSIVE
AND RELUCTANT TO DISCUSS NATURE AND ORIENTATION OF NEW
AFGHAN PEOPLES' DEMOCRATIC PARTY. HE DOWNPLAYS SOVIETS'
LINKS WITH AND SUPPORT OF THE NEW AFGHAN REGIME AND
EMPHASIZES AFGHAN VIEW OF INDIA AS A MODEL FOR AFGHANISTAN
TO EMULATE IN ITS DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS. SOVIET JOURNAL,
AFTER NOTING DAILY TELEGRAPH REFERENCE TO POSSIBLE
COUNTER COUP, HOPES THAT "STATESMEN IN THE WEST, AND NOT
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ONLY IN THE WEST, WILL BE SENSIBLE ENOUGH NOT TO
RESPOND TO INSTIGATORY CALLS REGARDING AFGHANISTAN."

1. DURING MAY 24 CALL BY EMBOFF, SOVIET MFA AFGHAN
DESK OFFICER SHUMINOV WAS EVEN LESS CANDID AND
FORTHCOMING THAN HE WAS DURING MAY 12 CALL BY JAPANESE
EMBOFF IMURA (REF A). SHUMINOV, IN A FRIENDLY BUT

SOMEWHAT NERVOUS VEIN, BEGAN THE MEETING BY DIGRESSING AT SOME LENGTH ABOUT HIS BACKGROUND. (HE SAID HE IS FIFTY-SEVEN, AN ENGINEER BY PROFESSION AND SERVED IN AFGHANISTAN TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO.) WHEN EMBOFF BEGAN SUBSTANTIVE CONVERSATION BY ASKING FOR HIS VIEWS ON DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN, HE ATTEMPTED TO JOKE THAT "WE DON'T KNOW MUCH OF WHAT IS OCCURRING THERE; PERHAPS YOU KNOW MORE THAN I." THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY A PREGNANT SILENCE, AN EXCHANGE OF SMILES AND, FINALLY, AN EXPRESSION OF DOUBT BY EMBOFF ON THIS SCORE.

2. EMBOFF THEN ATTEMPTED TO SOUND SHUMINOV OUT ON AMIN-GROMYKO COMMUNIQUE REFERENCES TO PARTY-TO-PARTY LINKS. SHUMINOV AT FIRST DENIED COMMUNIQUE REFLECTED IMPORTANCE OF PARTY-TO-PARTY LINKS. EMBOFF CITED SPECIFIC PORTIONS OF COMMUNIQUE, INCLUDING GROMYKO'S EXPRESSION OF GOOD WISHES TO THE LEADERS OF THE PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP) ON BEHALF OF THE CPSU CC. SHUMINOV DENIED IMPORTANCE OF REFERENCES WHILE CLAIMING THAT, AS AN MFA OFFICIAL, HE COULD NOT SPEAK AUTHORITATIVELY ON SUCH PARTY MATTERS. WHEN PRESSED FURTHER HE STATED DEFENSIVELY THAT THE CPSU HAS NEVER HAD RELATIONS WITH THE PDP OR THE KHALQ PARTY. SOVIET CPSU REPRESENTATIVES HAD NEVER BEEN INVITED TO AND HAD NEVER ATTENDED MEETINGS OR FORMAL SESSIONS OF THE KHALQ PARTY AND VICE VERSA. SHUMINOV SAID THE REASON FOR THIS IS THAT THE KHALQ PARTY, LIKE

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THE PDP, WAS NOT A COMMUNIST PARTY. ADDING THAT THE KHALQ PARTY HAD ALSO BEEN ILLEGAL, HE INDICATED THAT SOVIET LINKS WITH THE KHALQ HAD BEEN THEREFORE RULED OUT SINCE THE SOVIET UNION HAD MAINTAINED GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALL GOVERNMENTS IN POWER IN KABUL. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, SHUMINOV SAID THAT THE PDP IS A "NATIONAL-DEMOCRATIC" PARTY. HE REFUSED TO RESPOND TO FURTHER QUESTIONS ON CONDITIONS FOR ITS ASSUMING THE TITLE OF A COMMUNIST PARTY STATING THAT THIS DEPENDED ON WHETHER AND WHEN THE AFGHAN LEADERS DECIDED TO CATEGORIZE IT AS SUCH. HE DENIED THAT THE PDP IS MARXIST-LENINIST, REPEATING THAT IT WOULD BE UP TO THE PDP LEADERSHIP TO ATTACH THIS LABEL. THIS IT HAS NOT DONE. (NOTE: SHUMINOV'S STATEMENT CONTRADICTS RECENT STATEMENT BY SOVIET PROPAGANDIST AT PUBLIC LECTURE REPORTED REF B. END NOTE.)

3. SHUMINOV SAID THAT THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN (DRA), LIKE THE PDP, IS "NATIONAL-DEMOCRATIC" DRA LEADERS ARE NOW ATTEMPTING TO OVERCOME FEUDALISM AND TO DEVELOP THE COUNTRY. "BOURGOISE" ELEMENTS SUCH AS SMALL BUSINESSMEN IN TOWNS WILL "OF COURSE" NOT BE

EFFECTED. REDISTRIBUTION OF ZAMINDAR (LARGE LANDLORDS) LANDS, HOWEVER, WILL BE A PRIORITY, AS WILL OTHER REFORMS DESIGNED TO ERADICATE FEUDALISM. SHUMINOV RESPONDED AFFIRMATIVELY TO QUESTION OF WHETHER SOVIETS CONSIDER AFGHANISTAN TO HAVE EMBARKED ON "THE SOCIALIST ROAD" TO DEVELOPMENT. ASKED TO DRAW AN ANALOGY WITH OTHER COUNTRIES, HE REFERRED TO "HALF OF THE AFRICAN COUNTRIES" BUT STOUTLY REFUSED TO SPECIFY ANY ONE COUNTRY AT AN ANALOGOUS STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT.

4. AFGHAN-SOVIET RELATIONS: RECALLING THAT THESE RELATIONS HAVE REMAINED WARM SINCE LENIN'S TIME, SHUMINOV SAID THE SOVIET UNION HAS ALWAYS ATTEMPTED TO ASSIST AFGHAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TO IMPROVE

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RELATIONS AS POSSIBLE. THE PRESENT AFGHAN GOVERNMENT IS DESIROUS OF EXPANDING RELATIONS STILL FURTHER AND THE SOVIET UNION IS, AS BEFORE, WILLING TO DO SO. THE SOVIET UNION HAS COMPLIED WITH AFGHAN REQUESTS TO SPEED UP THE SIGNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PREVIOUSLY AGREED ECONOMIC PROJECTS AND TO INITIATE NEW ONES IN ORDER TO ACCELERATE ECONOMIC PROGRESS IN THE COUNTRY. THE SOVIET UNION WILL OF COURSE COOPERATE IN EXPANDING ECONOMIC COOPERATION.

5. INDO-AFGHAN RELATIONS: SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE CONVERSATION SHUMINOV SAID THAT THE AFGHANS CONTINUE TO VIEW INDIA AS A GUIDE AND A MODEL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THE AFGHANS ADMIRE WHAT THE INDIANS HAVE DONE AND WANT TO EMULATE INDIA'S EXAMPLE: (COMMENT: SHUMINOV'S REMARKS INDICATE SOVIET DESIRE TO HAVE INDIA IDENTIFIED WITH THE AFGHAN REGIME, PERHAPS WITH A VIEW TOWARD MAINTAINING LOW SOVIET PROFILE IN AFGHANISTAN AND ALLAYING POSSIBLE INDIAN SUSPICIONS ABOUT IMPLICATIONS OF AFGHAN COUP FOR INDIAN INTERESTS IN THE SUB-CONTINENT. END COMMENT.)

6. AFGHAN FOREIGN POLICY: GENERAL: SHUMINOV REPEATED AT LENGTH TARAKI'S STATEMENTS ON AFGHAN FOREIGN POLICY, INCLUDING OBJECTIVE OF BETTERING RELATIONS WITH AFGHANISTAN'S NEIGHBORS. WHEN SHUMINOV CITED THE AMIN-GROMYKO COMMUNIQUE TO underscore HIS POINT, EMBOFF NOTED THAT COMMUNIQUE POINTEDLY LIMITED ITS REFERENCE TO IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH "ASIAN" (AS OPPOSED TO NEIGHBORING) COUNTRIES. SHUMINOV SHRUGGED THIS OFF, STATING TARAKI'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS CARRIED MORE WEIGHT. TOWARDS CONCLUSION OF CONVERSATION, SHUMINOV QUESTIONED EMBOFF CLOSELY ON US VIEW OF NEW GOVERNMENT. EMBOFF

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RESPONDED THAT US HOPES FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH NEW GOVERNMENT AND WILL CONTINUE US AID PROGRAMS WHICH ARE GEARED MOSTLY TOWARD HELPING THE RURAL POOR. THE US, AS IN ALL OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD, IS ALSO VERY MUCH INTERESTED IN HUMAN RIGHTS. HUMAN RIGHTS, AS ELSEWHERE, WILL BE AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION FOR US IN CONSTRUCTING ITS RELATIONS WITH THE NEW AFGHAN GOVERNMENT.

7. FRG EMBASSY OFFICER TELLS US THAT IN RECENT CONVERSATION SPITSKY, DEPUTY CHIEF OF MFA MIDDLE EASTERN DIVISION, WAS NOTABLY NERVOUS AND RELUCTANT TO TALK. FINALLY, HE BLURTED OUT "I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE THINKING. I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT JUST AS WE HAVE NOT INTERFERRED IN TURKEY OR IRAN, SO WE ARE NOT INTERFERING IN AFGHANISTAN."

8. COMMENT: SHUMINOV'S MAIN OBJECTIVE WAS OBVIOUSLY TO DOWNPLAY THE EXTENT OF SOVIET LINKS WITH AND SUPPORT OF THE NEW REGIME. MOST RECENT ADDITION OF SOVIET WEEKLY JOURNAL NOVOYE VREMYA, HOWEVER, BLUNTLY LAYS SOVIET CONCERN FOR NEW REGIME ON THE LINE. FOLLOWING LONG CONDEMNATION OF WESTERN "SOUR GRAPES" OVER "PROGRESSIVE" SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHANGES IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES, COUPLED WITH DAILY TELEGRAPH'S REFERENCE TO POSSIBILITY OF A COUNTER COUP, ARTICLE ENDS WITH FOLLOWING WARNING: "IT IS TO BE HOPED, HOWEVER, THAT STATESMEN IN THE WEST, AND NOT ONLY IN THE WEST, WILL PROVE SENSIBLE ENOUGH NOT TO SUCCUMB TO INSTIGATORY CALL WHEREVER THEY MAY COME FROM." MATLOCK UNQUOTE VANCE

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